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ABSTRACT

Measurement of the interpersonal perceptions of student teachers, college supervisors, and cooperating teachers in the pupil schools revealed that the interns' self-concepts were similar to their perceptions of how their college supervisors would rate them as prospective teachers but highly dissimilar to their perceptions of their cooperating teachers' views. The actual ratings by the two groups of professionals were much lower than the students thought they would be. Interpretations of these results involved the affective dimension of the emergent self-concept. (Author)

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Self-Perceptions as Affective Dimensions of Student Teaching

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Objectives

The purposes of this study were as follows:

(1) To measure the self-perceptions of teaching interns as prospective teachers.

(2) To determine the interpersonal perceptions of student teachers from the standpoint of their college supervisors and cooperating teachers in the schools.

(3) To compare the ratings in terms of relative convergence or divergence.

Theoretical Framework

That the concept one has of oneself has an effect upon behavior is well documented. The etiology of self concepts is less clear. There is a strong theoretical base to support the component of significant others as one of the inputs into the development of self, which in turn unfolds as an emotionalized dimension of personality. Much research supports the parents as one of the primary agents in this process (e.g., Coopersmith, 1967; Soares and Soares, 1971a, 1974). Other research adds teachers, peers, or, in short, any individuals who are deemed important to the self (e.g., Brookover et al., 1964; Morse, 1964).

Kemper (1968) suggests three functional individuals for a person to be successful in his work, studies, or role: (1) one who sets high expectations of performance; (2) one who exemplifies the level of competence required;

and (3) one who will observe and mete out rewards for specific behaviors. It would seem, then, that the two professionals in the student teacher's developmental process would become the most important agents of his embryonic self concept as a teacher. The present research attempted to focus on these two people who supposedly are essential to the student teacher -- the college supervisor and the cooperating teacher in the classroom.

Methodology

There were 134 seniors in the study who had just completed their educational internship in urban and suburban public schools. The subjects were asked to rate themselves three times on an instrument used extensively in previous research (Soares and Soares, 1968, 1971b): (1) their self concepts as prospective teachers (SC_t); (2) their view of how their cooperating teachers look upon them as teachers (RS_{co}); and (3) their view of how their supervisors see them (RS_{sup}). In addition, the cooperating teachers (TP_{co}) and supervisors (TP_{sup}) rated these students, and comparisons were made. The measures used contain 72 bi-polar traits, and an index score is obtained from an algebraic sum of the positive and negative ratings on the 36 scales.

Results

First, the student teachers' self-concept scores were similar to the ratings they thought their college supervisors would give them but significantly lower than how they thought their cooperating teachers saw them. Both Reflected Self scores, however, were at a considerable distance - i.e., significantly higher - from the actual ratings of these two professionals. These results are indicated in Table 1.

Significance of the Study

Contrary to other research (Goodlad, 1965; Ort, 1964; Price, 1961), it would seem that the college supervisor looms larger in the mind of the student teacher as more important to the intern's image as a prospective

teacher than the cooperating teacher, which is consistent with previous studies cited (Soares & Soares, 1968, 1971b). Even though the cooperating teacher spends more time with the student teacher than does the supervisor, the closeness of the SC_t and RS_{sup} scores suggests that the student teacher's relationship with the college supervisor helps to dimensionalize with greater impact the student's self concept in a teaching role. The explanation might also lie in perceptual organization and personality dimensions rather than in terms of competencies and specific skills, as outlined by others (Ryans, 1964; Stanton, 1973; Wilhelms, 1967). It is interesting to note that the students believed the cooperating teachers would rate them much higher than they rated themselves. It may be that the interns were responding from the standpoint of previous feedback given to them about their work from the cooperating teachers.

On the other hand, both sets of professional ratings were far lower than the students thought they would be. The student teachers may be so caught up in their need to have their reflections consistent with their own self-images that they are unable or unwilling to perceive others' perceptions of them as anything but what they, the interns, see in themselves. In other words, they want to be adequate; they need to feel adequate; and so they are convinced that they are adequate. Therefore, others' behavior towards them is interpreted as consistent with their self concepts as adequate individuals in their chosen field. The affect accumulated which sustains this self-image is intermittently reinforced by occasional success - e.g., verbal praise, positive attitudes expressed, encouragement, prestige associated with being on the job, etc. Many other interpretations are possible, of course, evolving around the interns' attitudes toward both cooperating teachers and college supervisors, the source of final grades, the

residing of higher prestige (cf., Shawver, 1970), etc.

In any event, the controlling variable in the interns' perceptions of themselves as teachers is not necessarily the supervisory persons who guide and oversee the student teachers through their practice teaching experience, but perhaps instead the affective dimension of the concept of self with its antecedent components in the developmental process of human growth and in the behavior of significant familial members, as hypothesized and empirically concluded in much of the related literature.

Table 1

A Comparison of Self-Perception Scores of Student Teachers and Supervisors' Ratings of Them as Prospective Teachers

Dimension	Means and Standard Deviations	RS_{co}	RS_{sup}	TP_{co}	TP_{sup}
Self Concept (SC_t)	40.22 11.46	-10.90**	-2.17	5.10*	8.22**
Reflected Self (RS_{co})	51.12 11.65	- -	8.73**	15.97***	19.12***
Reflected Self (RS_{sup})	42.39 16.37	- -	- -	7.27*	10.39**
Teacher Perception (TP_{co})	35.12 9.58	- -	- -	- -	3.12
Teacher Perception (TP_{sup})	32.00 9.87	- -	- -	- -	- -

*$p < .05$ **$p < .01$ ***$p < .001$ N = 134

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